



FOR RELEASE
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Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Inches up Slightly in April
The Number of Jobs Declines

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Acting Director Adelita S. Orefice announced today that Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April was 5.7 percent. The April unemployment rate ticked up

	<u>Apr. 04</u>	<u>Mar. 04</u>	<u>Apr. 03</u>
Rhode Island	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%*
United States	5.6%	5.7%	6.0%

* Revised

0.1 of a percentage point from March. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents rose by 500 in April to an estimated 32,300. A year ago, the unemployment rate was 5.5 percent and the jobless level stood at 31,200. Nationally, the unemployment rate for April edged down 0.1 of a percentage point to 5.6 percent. For the first time

since July 2001, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was higher than the national average.

"While there was some upbeat news about national job growth last month, we experienced a decline in the number of jobs at Rhode Island businesses," said Acting Director Orefice. "An increase in the number of people looking for work, coupled with the decline in available jobs, pushed our unemployment rate up 0.1 of a percentage point in April."

Rhode Island Job Highlights

The Rhode Island job count decreased for the second successive month in April, following three consecutive months of increases. Businesses in the state reported a decline of 1,900 jobs (seasonally adjusted), bringing the April job count to 485,700. Over-the-month employment losses were reflected in Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-900); Manufacturing (-700); Professional & Business Services (-500); Leisure & Hospitality (-200); and Government (-100). Construction employment remained unchanged over the month. Since January 2004, jobs are down 1,500 mainly due to decreased employment in Leisure & Hospitality (-800) and Manufacturing (-500).

The more detailed unadjusted estimates increased by 4,400 (0.9%) over the month, the smallest March to April increase since 1991. The April job count stood at 484,600 (unadjusted). While employment gains were reported in a majority of the state's economic sectors, many were lower than normally experienced during this time of year due, in part, to the timing of the April school vacation period and to the severe weather conditions experienced during the survey week. The largest employment gains were noted in Construction (+1,700); Accommodation & Food Services (+1,300); Administrative & Waste Services (+1,000); and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+1,000). These increases offset losses in Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities (-800); Government (-400); Manufacturing (-300); and Wholesale Trade (-200).

The over-the-month seasonal increases in Construction; Administrative & Waste Services; and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation are typical for this time of year with warmer weather approaching. The April school vacation was responsible for a smaller than normal seasonal increase in Accommodation & Food Services, as well as a decline in Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities, since school lunch workers and school bus drivers were out of work during that period. The April school vacation also accounted for a reduced need for substitute teachers, resulting in a decline in Local Education employment. Manufacturing losses were due to decreased employment by Non-Durable Goods employers.

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Acting Director Adelita S. Orefice

Over the year, employment (unadjusted) was up 3,500 (+0.7%) from the 481,100 jobs (revised) reported in April 2003, bringing the April job count to 484,600 (unadjusted), the highest April job count on record. The largest over-the-year gains were noted in Construction (+2,300); Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,600); and Accommodation & Food Services (+1,400). Financial Activities (+600) and Other Services (+500) reported notable yearly gains as well. The largest employment losses occurred in Manufacturing (-1,300); Educational Services (-900); Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities (-400); Information (-400); and Wholesale Trade (-300). Government employment increased by 500 over the year, as job gains on the Local level (+1,000) overshadowed losses in the Federal (-100) and State (-400) segments.

Hours and Earnings

The \$12.98 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers in April 2004, while down one cent per hour over the month, represents a yearly gain of fourteen cents per hour. In April 2004, Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.5 hours per week, a decrease of 0.3 of an hour over the month, but an increase of 0.9 of an hour over the year.

Note: *The unemployment figures are based largely on a survey of households in Rhode Island and measure the unemployment status of people who live in the state.*

The employment figures in the "Rhode Island Job Highlights" section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state.

**Rhode Island Labor Market Information is available on our web site at www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi
The May labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, June 18, 2004.**

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The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training offers a wide array of employment and training services to both the general public and to individuals with unusual barriers to employment. DLT is ready to assist any job seeker, whether the goal is a first job, a better job, or a career change. Rhode Island's work force is protected through the enforcement of labor laws, prevailing wage rates, and work place health and safety standards. Temporary income support is available to unemployed, sick, or injured workers and a comprehensive rehabilitation program is available to those injured on the job.

DLT is dedicated to the growth and competitiveness of Rhode Island industry, administering a variety of training grants, tax credits, and apprenticeship programs to help employers. Economic indicators and labor market information are available for long-range planning. The Agency engages in active outreach, helping large and small employers retain their best workers or retrain their existing work force. At no cost to the employer, DLT will also screen job applicants, post job vacancies, and help businesses institute cost-sharing programs that can avert layoffs.

For more information on the innovative programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders at the Department of Labor and Training, please call (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

TDD (401) 462-8006

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